

Notes of Membership Recruitment and Retention Committee Meeting No 1, 4 March 1999, CUSCAL, Box Hill

Present: John Gill, Vern Hughes and David Griffiths

David Griffiths said that he had distributed copies of MRR 1-9 and that these had also been forwarded to the Secretary. He tabled two further documents and said that these would be mailed to the Secretary:

- Ann Hoyt Marketing Member Involvement – The American Experience
- Co-operative Retail Services, Social Audit Report, 1998

Advance Payment Subscriptions

Discussed and the view expressed that not many members would take up this option.

Action: It was agreed not to recommend this option to the board.

Commission Payments

There was disagreement on whether or not enabling member-co-ops to earn a commission on recruitment would be effective and would involve increased administrative costs. There was agreement that there were practical implementation issues.

Action: David Griffiths to prepare a further briefing paper.

Usage-based Subscriptions

It was noted that the notion of usage-based subscriptions was a consideration proposed by Co-operative Energy Ltd together with a number of other considerations.

Action: It was agreed that this was an undesirable and risky option

Service Usage

There was discussion on what members were using what services and how often.

It was agreed that it would be useful to establish what co-operatives were using which services and how often.

Action: A draft request to the Secretary for quotation will be prepared by David Griffiths for consideration by John Gill and Vern Hughes.

Membership Motivation

It was agreed that agreement on why co-operatives became and remained members of the Federation was fundamental and should underpin a membership recruitment and retention strategy.

It was noted that members needed to perceive that the Federation provided value for money.

It was also agreed that this perception was dependent on the level of subscriptions.

It was agreed that members expected the Federation to provide good service and do a good job and that the Federation needed to be and needed to be seen to be active in promoting the co-operative movement.

It was agreed there was a need to differentiate between perceptions of what was value for money.

Critical to this was whether or not the Federation was a “service” provider or an advocate. It was noted that recruitment based on services would facilitate recruitment but that there did not seem to be a demand for services.

It was noted that there are not many services and that they are not necessarily well promoted.

It was agreed that VCN was important in informing members, and others, about what the Federation was doing.

It was also suggested that influential individuals within co-ops and historical habit were factors in membership retention.

Action: David Griffiths to prepare a further briefing note.

Subscription Orientation

It was suggested that subscription levels should be market-based rather than expenditure-based.

There was no agreement on what this meant.

Action: David Griffiths to prepare a briefing note.

Subscription Levels

There was a brief discussion on the possibility of reducing rather than increasing subscription levels and agreement that the impact of this was unknown.

Unique Services

It was agreed that there were unique services that only the Federation could provide and that these services were our market strengths:

Co-operative advocacy
Co-operative education
Co-operative legislation
Co-operative publications

and that other services were less important.

Warrnambool Co-operative

There was discussion on the situation of the Warrnambool Co-operative Society Ltd and the impact of having to pay at the top level – the same as Bonlac and Murray Goulburn.

Action: It was agreed that the subscriptions levels should be modified to allow co-operatives such as Warrnambool to pay a lower subscription.

Meetings

It was noted that the MRR did not have to report to the board until August 1999 but agreed that an earlier completion date was desirable if achievable.

Documentation

Action: David Griffiths agreed to provide copies of the Federation's member survey and the grouping of subscription payments prepared for the VCN report.

Next meeting: 10.30 am, 25 March 1999, CUSCAL

Prepared: 4 March 1999